Debt relief for women farmers

1826. SHRI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many women have been eligible for debt relief under the debt waiver scheme announced for farmers' benefit;

(b) how much money has been involved in such specific relief, if any, for women farmers; and

(c) what is the percentage to total relief under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 has been implemented throughout the country, covering around 3.68 crore farmers with total eligible waiver/relief amounting to Rs. 65,318.33 crore (all figures provisional). However, the Data Reporting Systems of either Reserve Bank of India or National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development do not generate any specific information about women farmers under the Scheme.

Expected economic growth

1827. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased state:

(a) whether the economy is expected to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2009-10;

(b) if so, the details of each sector; and

(c) the steps being taken to increase the growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) As per the Economic Survey 2008-09, the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at factor cost is expected to grow at around 7.0 +/- 0.75 per cent in the fiscal 2009-10, assuming a normal monsoon. No sector wise details have been mentioned.

(c) The steps initiated by the Government for sustaining growth include short term measures of fiscal stimulus packages by enhancing expenditure levels and duty reductions. The Budget 2009-10 has *inter-alia* indicated the relevance of measures such as, stimulating investment in infrastructure, development of agriculture and providing assistance to exporters to help overcome short term disadvantages etc. The Central Government has increased the Budgetary allocation for 2009-10 for plan and non-plan expenditure by 34 per cent and 37 per cent over the budget estimates of 2008-09.

Recovery of outstanding taxes

1828. SHRI MOHAMMAD AMIN:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 221 given in the Rajya Sabha on July 25, 2000 and state:

(a) the status of tax recovery of the top 100 tax assessees;

(b) the details of the top 100 assessees as on date; and

(c) the total amount of tax outstanding on account of income tax, corporate tax, customs duty and central excise duty as on 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

State Maritime Boards

1829. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:
SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the status of State Maritime Boards have been excluded from the definition of local authority under the Finance Act, 2003;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether some of the States have made representations to the Central Government for waiving of income tax from the State Maritime Boards;

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(e) whether Government would consider the State Maritime Boards as "Local Authority" since it is a public utility organisation and has no motive to earn profit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) *Vide* Finance Act, 2002, definition of "local authority" under clause (20) of section 10 was made restrictive so as to include Panchayats, Municipalities, Municipal Committee and District Boards and Cantonment Boards only. This amendment was made effective from 1st April, 2003. Entities like State Maritime Boards thus went outside the scope of exemption available under that section.

(b) The above amendment was based on the recommendation of Advisory Group on Tax Policy and Tax Administration for the Tenth Plan which had suggested deletion of exemption provided under section 10 (20) of the Income-tax Act. The restrictive definition was adopted considering the need to phase out exemptions consistent with a moderate tax regime. However, exemption in the case of Panchayats, Municipalities, Municipal Committee etc. was retained as they are local self-government institutions.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The request was examined and not found feasible.

(e) The restrictive definition of the term 'local authority' was adopted considering the need to phase out exemption while moving towards a moderate tax regime. Policy imperatives currently being the same, revival of exemption to State Maritime Boards is not under consideration.